

[26 April, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) A two-member expert delegation from Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) visited Myanmar from April 1-6, 2001 to explore the possibilities of gas export from Myanmar to India and to evaluate the prospects of available offshore exploration blocks.

#### Hindi Officers/Translators in Ministry of External Affairs

4448. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of posts of Hindi Translators/Hindi Officers/ Assistants created in his Ministry and allied PSUs/Attached and Subordinate Offices for propagation of Hindi as official language and encouragement of Hindi correspondence;

(b) the number of such posts lying vacant and since when; and

(c) the reasons therefor and the steps taken to fill up such vacancies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) The number of posts of Hindi Translators/Hindi Officers/Hindi Assistants in the Ministry of External Affairs, including our Mission and Posts abroad and the Central Passport Organisation, is as follow:

Number of Hindi Translators — 23

Number of Hindi Officers — 9

Number of Hindi Assistants — Nil

(b) and (c) The post of Second Secretary (Hindi and Culture) in the High Commission of India, Suva, Fiji, is lying vacant since early March 1999, when the Mission was reopened. An incumbent has already been selected who would be assuming charge in the near future.

In the Central Passport Organisation, out of the total of 15 posts of Hindi Translators sanctioned in 1992, at present, 13 are lying vacant

for which indent has already been placed with the Staff Selection Commission by the Central Passport Organisation.

**Demonstration by Tibetan Refugees During LI-Peng's Visit**

4449. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Tibetan refugees had organised demonstrations during the visit of Chinese leader Li Peng;

(b) if so, whether this was not a misuse of hospitality of the Indian Government;

(c) whether Chinese Government has expressed their unhappiness over such demonstrations; and

(d) whether these demonstrations come in the way of normalization of our ties with China?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) No, Sir.

**Delay in issuance of passports**

4450. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "The eternal wait for a passport" published in the 'Statesman' dated 24th January, 2001;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware that people who are desirous of passports are unduly harassed and it takes even years together to issue a passport; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to streamline the functioning of various passport offices in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU) : (a) Yes, Sir.